News Release

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IDAHO TRIBAL LANDS WIND POWER DATA SHOWS "WORLD CLASS" WIND READINGS

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More than a year of wind speed measurement data taken from sites on two Idaho Native American reservations shows "world class" potential for wind power development, officials with the Idaho Energy Division said today.

Both the Fort Hall and Duck Valley Reservations had sites with average wind speed measurements in the 18-mile-per-hour range, making them a Class 6 wind resource, the second highest rating. Other sites on the reservations measured in the 16 mph range, ranking them as Class 5 category winds, still considered excellent for large scale wind power development.

Wind power scientists from the Idaho National Energy and Environmental Laboratory measured five sites on the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Fort Hall reservation. One site, Wheat Grass Ridge, recorded average winds of 15.8 mph at 20 meters above the ground, which calculates out to 18 mph winds at 50 meters. That's the approximate height at which large wind power rotors would operate and is the general industry standard height for determining large-scale commercial wind power potential.

A site on the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes Duck Valley reservation recorded average winds of 16.5 mph, which scientists say is equal to 18.35 mph at 50 meters,

Two other sites on the Fort Hall reservation, Lone Pine and Gibson Ridges, had 50-meter wind speeds calculated at 16.4 and 16.1 mph respectively. The two remaining sites recorded 50-meter wind speeds in the 13.9 and 13.7 category. Commercial wind power developers say 13 mph average wind, ranked as Class 3, is the minimum necessary for large-scale commercial wind farms.

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"The sites on the Fort Hall reservation represent 'world class' wind power potential. These are better than 90 percent of the wind farms in California," according to Gary Siefert, who heads the INEEL wind power program and who did the actual measurements and data evaluation.

Half a dozen anemometers that measure wind speeds were put in place on the reservations in 2001 and data has been collected for about 16 months now.

Idaho Energy Division and INEEL researchers also have put other anemometers in place to measure Idaho's winds at nearly a dozen other sites around the state. The measurement process is designed to allow state, Federal and private sector representatives to basically "prospect" for good wind power development sites. Officials can then zero in on those sites showing good promise for further evaluation.

Those various sites have so far provided a mixed bag of results. For example, three years of data from a site east of Idaho Falls has identified average winds of 17.6 mph at 50 meters. Another site located on City of Boise property south of Kuna has recorded 10.5 mph average winds.

Five state-owned sites are also currently being evaluated for possible wind power development potential. These include a site south of Lava Hot Springs, the Silver City Range site located in the Owyhee Mountains near historic Silver City and sites in area north and northeast of Mountain Home. Data on these and other state endowment land sites should come later this summer.

Private wind power developers are currently evaluating upwards of a dozen sites in Idaho. Another seven sites on Federally owned lands are also being evaluated for wind power potential. Idaho ranks 13 in the nation in wind power resources but has yet to have a single wind power site developed that can produce commercial levels of power.

For Internet information on Idaho wind power, visit **www.idahowind.org**.

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